

# **Drinking Water Project EIS Scoping Meeting Summary Memorandum**

## **Española Public Meeting 9/30/99**

### **Disposition of Comments Received**

*The scoping summary memoranda prepared following the public scoping meetings for the Drinking Water Project detailed the issues raised by public comment at those meetings. This memorandum addresses each of the comments received, and states the action that will be taken to address each comment. The verbatim comment text is shown in a table, with the action to be taken shown to the right. In some cases, the comments are presented slightly out of order (from the original scoping memorandum [file /espano~3.doc]) to allow for grouping of similar comments.*

**Background:** The Water Resources Division of the City of Albuquerque Public Works Department held a scoping meeting for the Drinking Water Project, as part of NEPA compliance requirements for public input in the draft Environmental Impact Statement process. The meeting was held from 6-8pm on Thursday, 9/30/99 at the Northern New Mexico Community College, 921 Paseo de Oñate, Española, NM. The meeting consisted of an “open house” format, with 6 display stations of project information, poster boards, and maps. The intent of the “open house” format was to allow the public to browse at their leisure and interest level, obtain information, and ask questions.

#### **Presentation:**

The displays at the six stations were organized topically as follows:

- 1) Overall Water Resources Management Strategy, including Aquifer Storage and Recovery
- 2) Provisional Action Alternatives A, B, C – Combining Diversion Options with Chappell Road/Site P
- 3) Delivery of Water – How the City of Albuquerque Plans on Delivering SJC Water
- 4) Diversion Options – Angostura, New Surface Diversion, Radial Collector Wells, In-River Subsurface Collector
- 5) NEPA Process, Scoping Process
- 6) Plant Siting Options with Drawing and Picture of What Plant Would Look Like and Evaluation Criteria

In addition to either a portable tape recorder or human recorder, a flip chart was placed at each station to record public comments and questions. An expert manned each station to answer questions and records comments.

A presentation kicked off the meeting, in which John Stomp, Manager of the Water Resources Division, gave a project overview, and Lori Robertson and other representatives from the US Bureau of Reclamation gave an overview statement of the NEPA process and encouraged public participation.

#### **Hirst Company Role:**

The Hirst Company provided media, public relations and public involvement support to the public

meeting as required, including:

- 1) Ad design development and placement in the following publications:  
Santa Fe New Mexican - Sun 9/19, Wed 9/22, Sun 9/26, Wed 9/29;  
Rio Grande Sun/Española - Thursday 9/16, Thursday 9/23, and Thursday 9/30  
Albuquerque Journal - Sun 9/12, Wed 9/15, Sun 9/19, Wed 9/22
- 2) Coordination of legal notice placement in same editions;
- 3) Development of mailing list and distribution to key stakeholders in the Española area;
- 4) Draft of press release to Mayor's Office for distribution to all major media outlets;
- 5) Counsel on attendees, contact with specific opinion leaders, and mobilization of attendees;
- 6) Counsel on information, assistance with preparation of materials and presentation.

**Attendees:**

There were 22 attendees at the 9/30 meeting. In addition, there were 16 project-related attendees: John Stomp and Susan Kelly of the City of Albuquerque; 2 representatives of the Bureau of Reclamation; 9 engineer/NEPA-related representatives from Parsons, CH2MHill, and Ecosystems; 2 Hirst Company representatives; and 1 Cooney Productions representative.

## **Drinking Water Project Española Public Scoping Meeting 9/30/99 Emerging Issues/Public Relations Implications**

During the Española meeting, several issues emerged as common public concerns or comments regarding the Drinking Water Project:

### **Effects on Heron and Abiquiu Reservoirs**

The main issue brought up during the Española meetings was clearly the effect the Drinking Water project will have on the water levels in both of these reservoirs. Will taking delivery of the water dry up (or conversely, overflow) the reservoirs? What effect will the project have on recreational opportunities?

These issues could escalate in the public's mind without forthright communication and evaluation in the EIS process. City materials do not reflect the effects and the Hirst Company recommends that materials be developed to address these concerns.

### **Effects on River Flow**

Many were concerned about the river flow – both potential of increased or decreased flow at different points. How will the project affect channel capacity? Will the integrity of the channels be compromised?

Will the project cause the river to dry up at all? River flow continues to be a main concern in all three cities, and the Hirst Company recommends an issue brief on this subject.

### **Farmer/Irrigation Concerns, Cultural/Environmental Concerns**

Comments were generated around these topics, although not as strong as in Socorro and Albuquerque. These topics continue to be at the forefront of the public's mind, and City materials need to be sensitive to them.

### **City Growth**

Some commented on city growth policies and how this project relates to Albuquerque's expansion (although the sentiment was not as strong in Española as in Socorro). However, as the Hirst Company noted in the Socorro report, the public continues to link these two subjects quickly. An issue brief should be prepared (see Socorro recommendation) to address these comments.

# Drinking Water Project

## Española Public Scoping Meeting 9/30/99

### Recorders/Flip Charts

### Detailed Summary of Comments

Organized topically into areas as follows:

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
<b>Main Issue: Effects On Heron/Abiquiu Reservoirs and Storage Issues</b>	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What are the potential effects of this project on Heron Reservoir – such as sports, fishing, recreational and operational effects?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What will Albuquerque do to maintain the reservoir system?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“How will this project affect the water level in Abiquiu vs. what it is now?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“How will the level in Abiquiu change?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“How will this project affect Heron?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I’m concerned about the long term impact to Heron reservoir and to northern NM water.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Could this dry up Heron in dry years?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“If both Albuquerque and the MRGCD need water, can water be kept within channel capacity?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I’d like to see a natural hydrograph below Abiquiu.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Why don’t you have more storage upstream? So when you have a wet year, build up your reserves.”	The remaining issues listed here and below do not fall easily into a resource category for evaluation in the Draft EIS. In general, the topics will be addressed in the alternatives analysis, Project Description, and resource evaluations in the Draft EIS.
“I’d like to see more water stored in Abiquiu.”	
“Because of the water we have, all these boats are coming in and changing my lifestyle.”	
“A little more water for Abiquiu, please.”	

### Impact of Drinking Water Project on River Flow

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“What will the effect be on the river below Abiquiu dam and the daily flow – more or less water?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What will the <i>native</i> flow out of Abiquiu be?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I’m concerned about channel stability (with increased flows) and bank stabilization below Abiquiu - I want it (the delivery) to mimic the natural flow (of the river).”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“How do you envision delivering the water – in slugs, slowly/continuous, will you call for a certain acre feet of delivery through the system, etc.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What happens if the capacity does not provide – where do excess flows go? Return flows?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Will there be increased/equalized flows in the river throughout the year (because of ASR)?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What impact will this project have on river flows below Albuquerque? Above Albuquerque?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Questions/Concerns about San Juan Chama Project Water

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“What will the effect be on others who have been using this water?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“How did the city get its rights to the SJC water – and are there any doubts about the city’s ownership rights/water rights to it?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What’s the delivery time through the system – will you draw the river down and dry it up?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What scares me a little is that Albuquerque has had this water and hasn’t really used it until now – well, somebody’s been using that water. You’re not going to be depleting the aquifer anymore – somebody else is going to have to use that water (the aquifer). Its going to have to be a lot of recycling for somebody downstream, and upstream currently is not going to have that water to use.”	The remaining issues listed here and below do not fall easily into a resource category for evaluation in the Draft EIS. In general, the topics will be addressed in the alternatives analysis, Project Description, and resource evaluations in the Draft EIS.
“Albuquerque has a right to that water, but don’t take ours too.”	

### Farmer/Irrigator Issues

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Will this project affect ditches and farmers?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“When will you divert most of the water - will you take it out during irrigation time?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“My concern is ditch safety.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Cultural Issues

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Are there any cultural resources on the water treatment plant sites?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Have the tribal/Pueblo cultural resources been considered?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I’m very concerned about cultural resources impacts.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Does the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) cover archaeology?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Environmental Justice Issues

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Does Española need to be concerned about environmental justice issues?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Diversion Methods

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“What is the preferred option?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“On all the diversion alternatives – have technical studies been done? Do you know each alternative’s capacity and maintenance?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I don’t think subsurface diversion will work and will cause bad environmental effects.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

“Have you thought about a pipeline from Abiquiu?”	Identification, screening, and evaluation of potential facilities sites will be detailed in a CH2M Hill/Parsons ES Technical Memorandum, and summarized in the Draft EIS. The selected sites will be a component of the project alternatives that are evaluated in the environmental analysis in the Draft EIS.
“You should pipe your water from Abiquiu, not through the Rio Grande.”	
“Which alternative is most favorable?”	

### Impact to Water Quality

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“I’m concerned about contaminants in the river above Albuquerque.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Environmental Concerns

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“I’m concerned about endangered species.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“I’m concerned about the effects on the bosque, riparian areas, and aquatic habitat.”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Aquifer Concerns, including ASR (Aquifer Storage and Recovery)

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Will existing wells be used for ASR?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Where will ASR occur?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.

### Plant – General and Siting Issues

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Site P is much more logical.”	Identification, screening, and evaluation of potential facilities sites will be detailed in a CH2M Hill/Parsons ES Technical Memorandum, and summarized in the Draft EIS. The selected sites will be a component of the project alternatives that are evaluated in the environmental analysis in the Draft EIS.
“Why is preference being given to South Valley sites?”	
“What are the chances of putting in a sewer treatment plant next to this surface water treatment plant – expansion opportunities.”	

### City Growth

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“This project is a short term solution- what happens in the next 10 years when the population of Albuquerque grows?”	Addressed in the Purpose and Need section, the Project Description, and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“You should control Albuquerque’s growth.”	
“Good water management is fine. There is, however, no discussion of ultimately limiting growth and thus demand. The perception in unlimited growth is leading in some areas (Washington State for example) to grass roots anti-conservation efforts aimed at limiting growth. Grass-roots movements and environmental awareness being what they are today (much stronger than say, 20 years ago), what will they be in 10 years from now? I know that limiting growth is an extremely difficult issue politically, but I strongly encourage those who play a role in the machinery to help bring this issue into serious discussion.”	

### General

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Will the Drinking Water project affect water supply of Española?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What alternative (of the Provisional Action alternatives) is most favorable?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What do you mean by native water?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Where is the City’s water stored?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What does Albuquerque want with our reach of the river?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Will Albuquerque be selling our water?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Whose demands take precedence – City of Albuquerque or MRGCD?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What’s the life span of this project?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“What will happen during a drought?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“For how long will these projects keep Albuquerque with enough water?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.



“What’s sustainability? How is this project related?”	Addressed in the Project Description and environmental evaluation in the Draft EIS.
“Why not harvest stormwater? Stormwater captures natural channels to create and enhance wildlife, wetlands, and recharge.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“You guys (City of Albuquerque) are very selfish. Everything is for Albuquerque.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Recreational activities add nothing to the tax rolls.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“What happens after permitting – what’s next?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“What’s the time frame of the final EIS and who gets it?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“How long will the EIS process take?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Will there be a rate adjustment during times of drought (for northern part of state)?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“What is the timeframe for construction to begin?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“You should find a similar project and show how it succeeded.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Water is the biggest asset we got.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Why are you having a meeting here if there aren’t anticipated impacts?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS